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SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: FORENSIC LABORATORY ENHANCEMENT
PROJECT REACHES NEW MILESTONE

REF: TASHKENT 507

¶1. (U) As part of an ongoing assistance project funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), a team of forensic experts from the Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative and Training Assistance Program (DOJ/ICITAP) traveled to Uzbekistan in late May to install additional equipment and train counterpart Uzbek scientists at the Ministry of Health's Main Forensic Laboratory. This INL project has already generated tremendous goodwill toward the U.S. within the Ministry of Health (reftel).

¶2. (U) The latest equipment installed is a TOXI-LAB AB System, which uses sophisticated instruments to screen drug samples. The thin-layer chromatography technology significantly speeds up laboratory analyses and improves the reliability of the results. The DOJ/ICITAP specialists also installed an Agilent UV System, which can be applied to drug screening tasks but in addition enables the laboratory to detect substances such as carbon monoxide in bodily fluids. This will facilitate investigations into suspicious death cases. Laboratory serology experts also benefited from training and stocks of pre-mixed chemicals for rapid screening of evidence in homicide and sexual assault cases. The DCM formally signed over the equipment amidst loud applause from the assembled staff members.

¶3. (U) As with previous visits, the latest trip by DOJ/ICITAP experts combined donations and proper installation of advanced equipment with training. In particular, the U.S. experts reinforced the importance of good quality assurance practices, which assists the long-term goal of helping the laboratory obtain international accreditation. As part of the INL-funded project, several Uzbek scientists will soon travel to see a state-of-the-art U.S. laboratory in Houston, Texas, as well as attend an international professional conference in New Orleans. The laboratory professionals in this remote country appreciate opportunities to interact with foreign colleagues as much as the equipment donations, and the steadily increasing capabilities and standards of this

key laboratory will contribute to a stronger criminal justice system.

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